

NSC BRIEFING

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5 April 1960

IRAQ

25X1 I. [] the Iraqi army is spearheading an increasingly tough policy toward the Iraqi Communists [] Prime Minister Qasim, despite the ambiguity of his public statements, is backing this policy. 25X1

A. The past few weeks have seen a number of moves against the Communists and rebuffs of their demands.

1. Qasim has commuted the death sentences of several key officials of the former royal regime, including ex-Foreign Minister Jamali (Jě-mäl'ee), ex-Deputy Chief of Staff Daghistani (Däg-is-tän'ee), and Nuri Said's son-in-law Khalil Kanna (Kă-leel' Kăn'nă).
2. He followed this with postponement of the executions of Baathists convicted of an attempt on Qasim's life last October.
3. Last week the regime rejected the application of the Communist-front Republican party for legal status; this followed two earlier rejections of Communist bids for licensing of a party.
4. A recent wave of Communist-inspired strikes was suppressed forcefully and orders were issued for the arrest of Communist agitators in southern Iraq.

B. These and other moves have weakened the influence of Iraqi Communist leaders and reduced their ability to arouse their followers.

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1. In an open admission of frustration, the Communist press has publicly complained about the authorities' interference with Communist plans to turn the Peace Partisans Parade earlier this week into a show of Communist strength.
 2. Earlier the regime had flatly refused the Communists permission to hold a demonstration commemorating last year's anti-Communist uprising in Mosul.
 - C. The army, meanwhile, has increased security precautions throughout the country, and there has been an improvement in discipline, as well as a decrease of Communist influence, in the armed forces.
 - D. The army now is the mainstay of the regime.
 1. Qasim's dependence on the army has increased steadily of late and his room for maneuver is small.
- II. The Iraqi regime recently has also been showing a somewhat more friendly attitude toward the West.
- A. Several months ago, Iraqi officials were deliberately avoiding American embassy personnel and were extremely reticent at any meetings.
 - B. Now they are not only speaking in friendly terms, but a number of them in recent conversations have voiced disappointment with and criticism of Communist Bloc economic and educational assistance.
 - C. Iraq is now actively seeking bids by Western firms on some projects in the development program which has bogged down.

D. The United States and other Western countries have also been asked to help fill some 200 teaching positions at Baghdad University.

III. The Soviet effort to counter the current Iraqi trend includes the scheduled arrival in Baghdad tomorrow of Mikoyan, the highest Soviet official ever to visit the Arab world.

A. The overt purpose of Mikoyan's visit is to open a Soviet trade fair.

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